

Academic Life

THE CURRICULUM

To prepare students for full participation in their society, Converse College offers a coherent academic program that encompasses a variety of educational experiences. All students complete a sequence of general education courses which provide instruction in language and writing, analysis and problem solving, and physical coordination to develop knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of Western culture and introduce the disciplines of liberal learning. All students also complete either a double major, a major and a minor, or a single major. Students concentrate on these areas of study in the last two years of their college work. Students may choose majors from the disciplines within the liberal arts or from career-related areas that have their foundations in one or more of these disciplines.

An outstanding feature of the Converse curriculum is the double major, which most students have the opportunity to complete in the regular four-year academic program. In a double major, students may choose two subjects within the liberal arts or may choose a traditional discipline and a career-related program. Thus, students interested in an area directly related to career preparation also have the opportunity to study one of the liberal arts subjects in depth, and students interested in more than one of these liberal arts subjects have a structure whereby they may pursue sophisticated and specialized work within two of these disciplines.

THE MICKEL LIBRARY

The Mickel Library houses more than 200,000 books, recordings, scores, microforms and audio-visual (AV) materials, and seats 240 students. In addition to the circulation, reference, and browsing areas, the library has a large music library, a curriculum resource center (CRC), a media check-out department, a microform

area, study carrels, and a special collections/archives department. A catalog of the library's collections and a number of periodical indexes are available on library computers and the campus computer network. The library currently maintains subscriptions to 659 periodicals in print or microform and to some 4,200 in electronic format.

Converse College, according to its stated purpose, is an independent liberal arts institution, with a professional School of Music. The Mickel Library exists to support the programs of the College. The mission of the library, therefore, is to serve the informational needs of the Converse community by providing undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff with timely access to academic books, periodicals, musical scores and recordings, and other media in support of the curriculum and by instructing students in the methodology of library research.

THE ACADEMIC CALENDAR

The academic year is divided into three terms of 13 weeks, 6 weeks, and 13 weeks. Students normally take 12 semester hours the first term, 6 semester hours the second (winter term), and 12 semester hours the third.

The six-week term enables students to engage in internships, participate in a study/travel program, devote the term to an intensive study of a single subject, or, if they prefer, enroll in the regular courses of the curriculum which are provided in adequate number and variety.

THE CONVERSE II PROGRAM

Converse College has a special program, Converse II, designed to meet the needs and interests of adult women. Under the auspices of the program, women may enter or return to college to complete undergraduate degrees, earn second undergraduate degrees, or enrich themselves personally or professionally. Outstanding features of the program are the simplified application procedure, special fee rate, no SAT or entrance test scores required, day and evening classes, career counseling, and individualized academic advisement. The Converse II program is an integral part of Converse College—the teaching faculty and the academic requirements for the degree are the same for both traditional-aged and Converse II students.

Converse II students may complete requirements for the General Education Program and majors in business administration and accounting in the evening.

Any woman who is a high school graduate and who is at least 24 years old, or has her 24th birthday prior to the beginning of the semester for which admission is requested, is eligible to apply. Steps in the application process include submitting an application and fee, submitting high school and/or previous college transcripts, and having a personal interview with the director. All applicants with less than thirty hours of college credit must submit both high school and college transcripts.

Each admitted applicant is assigned one of three classifications:

1. degree candidate
2. Special II student
(*not a degree candidate*)
3. provisional student
(*degree candidate*)
4. probationary student
(*degree candidate*)

Degree candidates may be full-time or part-time and may enroll in any major course of study, subject to departmental criteria. There are no time limits on graduation, but the student must maintain the academic standards set forth in the “Academic

Regulations” section of the *Student Handbook* and in this catalog. Special II students (non-degree candidates) may take courses for credit or may audit courses. Students who only audit classes need not submit previous transcripts. Provisional students are those applicants whose high school record meets the standard of students that are usually accepted, and those who have college work with a GPA between 2.49 and 2.00. Probationary students are those applicants whose high school record is below that of students usually accepted, those who earned a GED, and those who have college work with a GPA below 2.00. Women being considered for provisional and probationary status must show maturity and motivation that would indicate potential for success at Converse. Probationary and provisional students must complete at least three courses within their first three terms and must have a cumulative 2.00 GPA in order to continue at Converse. Normally these courses should be courses that satisfy Converse College GEP requirements. Probationary students must receive special individual counseling before, during, and after each course they attempt during the first year.

Once accepted into Converse II, women may, with departmental approval, enroll in any of the courses and degree programs available at the College. When Converse II students complete at least 60 semester hours of work at Converse, they may graduate “with honors” when grade point ratios are 3.5 or above. Academic regulations are the same for Converse II students as for other students, and it is the student’s responsibility to know and fulfill curriculum requirements.

Converse II students are eligible to apply for federal and state grants as well as a variety of loan programs. Certain restrictions apply to students receiving financial assistance such as a minimum number of credit hours enrolled per semester and classification as a full degree candidate. For fees and financial assistance see the Converse II section of the *Student Handbook*.

Those Converse II students interested in residing in the residence halls during their time of study should contact the Director of Converse II for further information.

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CAREER AND PRE-PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

The faculty of Converse College believes that studies in the liberal arts provide the best preparation for career and pre-professional training. In addition, the College offers majors in selected career-related areas and a number of programs that provide the foundations for particular occupations. These programs are not intended to be substitutes for technical education or for graduate professional training. Rather, they provide introduction to the essential knowledge and basic skills of the vocation.

These programs are offered in the conviction that the liberal arts provide the most practical preparation for all of life. The programs, therefore, consist of a set of liberal arts courses which are organized in a sequence or pattern having relevance to a recognized occupation or vocation.

To enrich these programs, as well as the career-related majors, most departments offer internships in which students earn academic credit for study and work at a business, a government office, a service agency, or another organization within the profession. Many of the internships are offered in locations other than Spartanburg. Since the studies in the classroom are primarily theoretical, the internship brings theory and practice together, thereby enriching the educational process.

The career and pre-professional programs are described in this catalog beginning on page 129, following the course listings for the departments of the College of Arts and Sciences.

THE OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES

The Office of Career Services offers career counseling to Converse students and alumnae. Through individual and group counseling, interest assessment, and topical seminars, the staff helps students identify their values, abilities, and interests. Students are encouraged to make decisions and set goals that move them toward rewarding

and satisfying futures. The office maintains information about current career data and graduate schools, as well as listings of part-time, full-time, and summer jobs.

The Office of Career Services also provides workshops on resume writing, interviewing skills, and job search techniques. Each senior may place a resume and letters of recommendation on file to be sent, by request, to prospective employers or to graduate schools. Recruiters representing government, education, and business periodically visit campus to interview seniors who meet their employment needs.

Students are encouraged to begin to use the Office of Career Services in their freshman year.

INTERNSHIPS

Internships, work experiences which earn academic credit under the direction of a faculty member, are extremely valuable for career decision-making and in providing career related experience. Internships must be arranged by Career Services and/or the student's faculty director.

Interested students must attend an internship planning session sponsored by Career Services. At this meeting, students will be familiarized with procedures and receive an approval card and a handbook.

Prior to being placed in an internship, a student *must* meet departmental requirements and be approved by the appropriate departmental faculty director. The faculty director assumes the responsibility of determining the student's eligibility and awarding academic credit. Eligible students then work with Career Services so that a proper match between student and agency occurs.

Although every attempt will be made to locate an internship for each eligible student, Converse College does not guarantee placement. A listing of agencies providing internships is maintained in Career Services.

Each department determines the final arrangement between hours worked and

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credit earned. At the end of the internship, each student will be evaluated by the site supervisor. In turn, the student will evaluate the placement in terms of its educational value.

Most internships are not paid. Transportation costs and expenses of a personal nature are borne by the student.

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS FOR INTERNSHIPS

Internships are limited to juniors and seniors who have a 2.0 cumulative grade point ratio and who have completed, prior to approval, at least 12 semester hours at Converse College. Departments may stipulate additional requirements and prerequisites. In some cases, sophomores who have met the other prerequisites and who have the consent of the faculty director may petition the appropriate academic dean for permission to intern.

All internships are graded on a pass/fail basis. A student may apply a maximum of 12 semester hours of internship credit toward graduation.

PROGRAMS FOR STUDY ABROAD

France: The Converse College Study Abroad Program in France offers to qualified students, through a cooperative program with the Institute for American Universities, the opportunity to study in Avignon or Aix-en-Provence. All instruction is in French in the Avignon program. Some instruction is in English in the Aix-en-Provence Program. Students live in private homes in these cities in the culturally rich region of Provence. Some instruction is in English in the Aix-en-Provence program. Participants normally earn 15 hours of credit per semester, and their grades and credits are recorded as if the courses had been taken at Converse.

Spain: The Converse College Study Abroad Program in Spain offers to qualified students opportunities to study in Madrid and Toledo through cooperative arrangements with Saint Louis University in Spain and the Toledo International Program of Spanish Language,

Latin American, and European Studies respectively. Students may spend one semester or one year in Spain. Their grades and credits are recorded as if the courses had been taken at Converse.

Costa Rica: The Converse College Study Abroad Program in Costa Rica offers to qualified students opportunities to study in San Jose through cooperative arrangements with the University of Kansas. Students may spend one semester or one year in Costa Rica. Their grades and credits are recorded as if the courses had been taken at Converse.

England: As a regular feature of the academic program, Converse offers its students the opportunity to participate in a winter term in London. A new program of course work and travel is designed for each term, but certain features remain constant. Converse faculty members accompany the group and teach the courses.

Other Opportunities: Arrangements can be made for study in other countries throughout the world, including Asia, Australia, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Europe. It is possible to establish consortium agreements with other organizations. In these situations, grades and credits are recorded as if the courses had been taken at Converse.

Winter-Term Travel: In addition to the programs described above, Converse offers a number of opportunities during the six-week winter term beginning in January for off-campus study.

Students are encouraged to see Dr. Jeri King, Director of International Studies, to learn more about study opportunities abroad.

ACADEMIC COUNSELING

Academic advisers help students adjust to college life by guiding them in choosing academic programs, helping them plan schedules, and conferring with them concerning problems. Upon entering Converse, students are assigned to academic advisers who schedule conferences with them at regular intervals and are available at other times for consultation.

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Faculty advisers are available particularly during preregistration and registration periods to offer assistance in selecting courses, deciding which major fields students might select, and arranging reasonable schedules. **The final selection of courses and schedules, however, is the responsibility of the student, not of her adviser.** Students, therefore, must exercise great care in registering to avoid enrollment in classes not necessary for graduation, courses which have been previously completed, and subjects for which there are prerequisites which have not been completed. Moreover, the student is responsible for planning her college work in such a way as to include courses which are not offered each term or each year.

Upon selecting a major, the student confers with the chair of the major department for academic advice. If the student chooses a double major, the chair of either department may serve as academic adviser.

WRITING CENTER

Located on the second floor of the library in Suite 204, the Writing Center provides assistance to all students seeking to build their writing skills. The Writing Center is dedicated to providing academic support to the needs of student writers across the curriculum. In addition, any students who wish to enhance their skills, independent of specific course work, or have a friendly reader for their newest poem, essay or story, can find assistance in the Center.

The Writing Center offers assistance with learning prewriting strategies, understanding the writing process, developing a thesis, strengthening the focus of a paper, including supporting details, creating effective introductions, recognizing strengths and needs, and identifying and correcting grammatical errors.

The Writing Center provides students with one-on-one tutoring, small group workshops focusing on specific topics, reference books, handbooks, professional writing texts which may be checked out, Macintosh computers, creative writing, and English as a second

language assistance. While the Center cannot provide a proofreading/editing service or a guarantee of better grades, it will serve as a caring and concerned trial audience for what students have written.

The Writing Center is open Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to noon, Monday through Thursday, 1:15 pm to 5:00 pm.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT CENTER

The Academic Support Center, located on the third floor of Mickel Library, was established to help students improve academic performance and to develop skills that will help them succeed both inside the classroom and in life beyond college. Through individualized counseling, seminars, and Converse 101: Strategies for Success, students can develop academic and social skills in areas such as: critical thinking, how to study and use academic resources, how to take notes and tests, how to set goals and stay motivated, how to manage time and money, how to get along with and grow in relationships with others, how to stay healthy physically and emotionally, and how to avoid stress. Referrals to departmental tutors are available.

Students with documented disabilities may apply for academic accommodations through the Center (see “Academic Policies on Disabilities”). Students with documented disabilities may apply for academic accommodations through the Center (see “Academic Policies on Disabilities”). The Center upholds standards of strict confidentiality in working with all students and complies with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Records are stored in a secure location and reviewed only by authorized personnel. (see HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices.)

Converse 101 is a one-semester, one-credit course open to first-semester freshmen, designed to help them make the transition from high school to college successfully. Students on academic probation are required to take Converse 101 as part of their probationary contracts.

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The Academic Support Center is open from mid-August to mid-June, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm during the academic year and 8:00 am to 5:00 pm during June. From mid-June to mid-August, contact the Dean of the School of Arts & Sciences, the Dean of the Petrie School of Music, or the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies & Special Programs for questions or further information.

THE NISBET HONORS PROGRAM

Co-directors: Dr. Laura Brown and Dr. John Theilmann

Although Converse has offered some honors courses in the past, the Nisbet Honors Program began in 2000 when Converse alumna Marian McGowan Nisbet '62 and her husband Olin established an endowment to support a full Honors Program. Our program seeks to offer the academically gifted student the challenge and community in which she may grow to her full potential. The Honors Program includes opportunities to do independent research with faculty mentors, to take honors courses with other academically gifted students, to meet nationally known visiting scholars, and to meet socially to discuss intellectually challenging topics.

One of the most unusual features of the Nisbet Honors Program is its emphasis on interdisciplinary learning. Our interdisciplinary seminars have two faculty from different fields in the classroom throughout the entire course, and students learn how different branches of learning approach the tasks of collecting and interpreting evidence, indeed, of making sense of our complex world.

Admission to the program is competitive and is by invitation only. A select number of entering freshmen are invited into the program based on their outstanding high school performance and their potential for success in college. Students who do well once they have begun their studies at Converse are also considered for the program; freshmen and sophomores must earn at least a 3.3 GPA after taking 12 hours at Converse to be invited to apply.

Requirements:

To graduate from the Honors Program at Converse, a student must meet a number of challenges that will equip her for graduate study and for a variety of fulfilling careers.

Achievement:

She must continue to perform well in her academic courses. Students who consistently achieve a GPA below 3.0 or who receive below a B- in two or more honors courses may be asked to leave the program.

Coursework:

She must take the following courses:

- **Freshman Honors Seminar** (or if the student enters after her freshman fall, another honors course to replace it)
- **Interdisciplinary Honors Seminar** (Students who successfully complete a Freshman Honors course take these small interdisciplinary courses. Professors from different fields team-teach these courses. Recent offerings include "The American Musical: Psychological and Political Perspectives," "The History of Disease," and "Human Sexuality and the Literature of Love, Marriage, and Birth.")
- **Junior Honors Seminar (HON 399H)** One credit, pass-fail, offered once a year, open to sophomores and juniors. See page for more info.
- Either a **Senior Honors Thesis** or two more honors experiences (these could include two additional honors courses, a year-long honors course and an honors directed independent study, or some combination of the above)

Because the Nisbet Honors Program is interdisciplinary and aims to give students a broad base of knowledge, students will not be allowed to take all of their coursework in only one department or with only one professor.

In addition to the Nisbet Honors Program, Converse College recognizes women who achieve academic excellence in a number of ways.

Honors at Entrance: Students who because of their academic record in high school and their test scores receive named scholarships are awarded honors at entrance.

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Class Honors: The three students with the highest average in each of the returning classes are designated annually as Class Honor Students based on the previous year's GPA.

Dean's List: Eligibility for the Dean's List, prepared at the end of each fall and spring term, is based on the following criteria:

1. The student must be full-time
2. The student must have no incomplete grades in that term
3. First year freshman must have a 3.4 GPA in that term
4. All other full-time students must have a 3.6 GPA in that term

Graduation with Honors: Students graduate with "academic distinction" from Converse according to the following criteria:

1. *cum laude*, GPA of 3.5 but less than 3.75
2. *magna cum laude*, GPA of 3.75 but less than 3.90
3. *summa cum laude*, GPA of 3.90 and above

These standards refer to the Converse grade point average. To qualify, a student must have a minimum of 60 hours of work at Converse or in Converse programs.

Other honors accorded graduating seniors include the Elford C. Morgan and the Pi Kappa Lambda Awards for the highest cumulative average earned, respectively, by a student in the College of Arts and Sciences and a student in The Petrie School of Music.

HONORARY ORGANIZATIONS

Alpha Lambda Delta: Alpha Lambda Delta is a national honor society for the recognition of high academic achievements in the freshman year. To be eligible for Alpha Lambda Delta, the student must have a cumulative average of not less than 3.5 and carry a full class load through the short term of the freshman year.

Alpha Psi Omega: Alpha Psi Omega is a national honorary fraternity in Theatre Art. Candidates for admission must be active members of the Palmetto Players and demonstrate outstanding and continual contributions to the Theatre Program at

Converse.

Delta Omicron: Delta Omicron is a professional music fraternity whose purpose is to encourage the highest possible scholastic attainment, excellence of individual performance, and appreciation of good music, to create and foster fellowship through music, to develop character and leadership, and to give material aid to worthy music students. Membership is open to freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, and graduate students of outstanding scholarship and musicianship.

The Gamma Sigma Society: The Gamma Sigma Society is the honorary scholarship society of the College of Arts and Sciences of Converse College. The purpose of the Society is to encourage scholarship among the students of Converse College and to honor by election to membership in the Society those seniors, not to exceed ten percent of the graduating class, who have demonstrated superior scholastic attainment throughout their entire college course. To be eligible for election, students must be candidates for a bachelor's degree in the liberal arts and sciences. Criteria for selection to Gamma Sigma are based on the Phi Beta Kappa standards.

Kappa Delta Epsilon: Kappa Delta Epsilon is a national honorary organization in education. Its purpose is to promote the cause of education by fostering: 1) a spirit of fellowship; 2) high standards of scholastic attainment; and 3) professional ideals among members. Membership in the Gamma Chi Chapter of Converse College is by invitation to undergraduate applicants who have a major or minor in education; at least 45 semester hours; and a GPA of 3.5 or better.

Mortar Board Gavel Chapter: Mortar Board is a national honor society of college seniors whose purpose, in part, is "to support the ideals of the university, to advance a spirit of scholarship, to recognize and encourage leadership, and to provide the opportunity for a meaningful exchange of ideas as individuals and as a group." Qualifications for membership in Mortar Board include

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outstanding leadership, scholarship, and service. All juniors with a cumulative scholastic average of 3.0 or above are considered for membership. Selection and tapping of new members occurs in the spring of their junior year.

Phi Sigma Iota: Phi Sigma Iota is a national foreign language honor society. Its primary objectives are the recognition of above average ability and attainments in languages and literature, the stimulation of advanced work and individual research in this field, and the promotion of a friendship and understanding between our nation and the nations using these languages. Students eligible for membership must meet the following requirements: Junior or Senior standing (Sophomore in exceptional circumstances); a curriculum with an emphasis in foreign language; at least a “B” average in their entire college work as well in all courses in language; and completion of at least one course in foreign language at the third-year level or beyond. Membership is by faculty recommendation and invitation.

Pi Gamma Mu: The purpose of Pi Gamma Mu is to improve scholarship in the social sciences and to provide an equal opportunity for an exchange of ideas between individuals involved in the various fields of social science. Only students with at least twenty semester hours of social sciences with an average grade therein of not less than “B” are considered for membership.

Pi Kappa Lambda: “Strive always for the beautiful” is the motto of Pi Kappa Lambda National Music Honor Society. Membership is by invitation to those faculty members, graduate students, seniors, and juniors in the field of music who show outstanding leadership and scholarship. Graduating seniors in The Petrie School of Music whose averages in all subjects rank among the upper one-fifth of the class and juniors whose averages in all subjects rank among the upper

one-tenth of the class are eligible for election.

Student Marshals: Student Marshals are chosen from the rising junior class each year on the basis of academic excellence. They are among the most honored students on campus. They officially represent the college in the formal ceremonies of the academic year, including Formal Opening Convocation, Founder’s Day, Awards Day, Baccalaureate, and Commencement, where they add order and dignity to the proceedings. In addition, marshals serve at other functions such as the Festival of Lessons and Carols, Senior Assembly, certain required assemblies, and Honor Emphasis Assembly.

Theta Alpha Kappa: Theta Alpha Kappa is the national honor society for Religious Studies and Theology. It promotes excellence in the study and teaching of these fields and seeks to bring students, teachers, and writers of Religious Studies and Theology together both intellectually and socially. Membership is open to students who have completed 12 hours in religion or related courses, who have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0, who have a grade point average of at least 3.5 in religion courses, and who are in the upper thirty-five percent of their class.